



There is magic and fantasy awaiting all children at the annual “Kinderbookfest”

The interest of Aruba’s young people was manifest at the first day of the annual week long “Kinderbookfest” at the Biblioteca Nacional on Friday. Book appropriate for children of all ages, in Dutch, English, Papiamentu and Spanish were for sale, and with every twenty florins spent, each child received this year’s gift, a copy of “Hopu” by written Lilliana Braamskay-Erasmus and illustrated by Danielle Schrothorst. This year’s festival featured seven new books in Papiamentu for the children, including a beginner’s illustrated dictionary.

Many authors, such as Liddy van der Straaten, the author of “Luz, un Coneu Arubiano” (“Luz, the Arubian Rabbit”) were there to autograph their work as eager children snatched up the beautifully illustrated books by local authors, as well as international publications.

Not only were there books to purchase and enjoy, but the evening opened with a show about magic and fantasy, performed by a number of teachers and library staff. Attending was Aruba’s governor, The Honorable Fredis Rufunjol. Inside the library, actors costumed as penguins performed the story of the “Penguins that came to Aruba” by Heleen ver Berg. It tells of two penguins, which actually do mate for life, who swam to Aruba to lay their egg. It is a story with a moral about love, loyalty and the responsibility of being a father and it played to a packed house of receptive children.

The Biblioteca Nacional’s Annual Bookfest is greatly anticipated event with a number of booksellers taking part, but it is not only about selling books, it is a wonderfully entertaining and educational event devoted to the island’s youth. This stimulating environment encourages them to read and to appreciate the national library, and the many events it offers young people throughout the year. Bookfest organizers recognize that Aruba’s youth is its future, and an educated and cultured youth is vitally important. Events such as the bookfest and others are not as frivolous as they superficially appear; they are building a foundation for a new generation of informed and erudite adults, but for now, it was just a lot of fun!